

April 6, 2011

Ms. Lesia Liss (D)
State Representative
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Ms. Liss,

We are counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

The Governor believes that schools can save large amounts of money by cutting the cost of non-instructional services. As far as Warren Consolidated is concerned, that's a false assumption. The district has already cut these costs to the bare minimum. So an additional 10% won't make a dent in the \$17 million loss.

If the governor's current budget plan is enacted, our schools have no choice left except to make large program cuts and increase class sizes. These will definitely impact the educational lives of our students.

We cannot bring Michigan's economy back by lowering our investment in an educated workforce. The Governor's plan to reduce business taxes and use K-12 School Aid funds to support community colleges and universities is definitely not "shared sacrifice." Schools have already sacrificed a lot. Any more will fall directly on the backs of our children – they are the future of our state.

Sincerely,



Sandra Hawrys
40804 Groveland
Clinton Township, MI 48038
586-412-2580

Mary Ann Pisarski
31647 Shawn
Warren, MI 48088

April 5, 2011

Ms. Lesia Liss
State Representative
P. O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Liss:

We are counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

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Sincerely,



Mary Ann Pisarski

March 18, 2011

The Honorable Lesia Liss
N792 House Office Building
House of Representatives
Lansing, MI 48909


Dear Madam,

You and your colleagues are currently considering many proposals that will greatly affect the quality of education in Michigan. I teach in the Warren Fitzgerald District and live next door in Royal Oak. I realize we are facing severe budget problems, but I am very concerned about the quality of education of our future citizens. What kind of workforce will we be preparing for the future if you continue to cut at programs which are necessary to make them part of a viable workforce?

In the eyes of the State a district's success is based on MEAP scores. How are we going to improve our scores if funding is taken away for intervention reading and math programs which are so necessary to help our disadvantaged and ESL students? In our district we are especially hit hard with poverty and foreign students. How are we going to prepare students for technology when there isn't money to update old technology. I feel like we are being set up for failure just so financial managers can come in and take over. What draw will Michigan have for potential workers from out-of-state if the quality of our schools declines?

Please do not attempt to fix the financial mistakes of the past on the back of education. If you truly value education, please work with us and not against us.

Sincerely,



Valerie L. Burton
2201 E. Hudson Ave.
Royal Oak, MI 48067

March 31, 2011

Dear Ms. Leiss,

As a father of two young boys and a firm supporter of public education, I am counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anthony O. Viviano".

Anthony O. Viviano

April 7, 2011

Dear Ms. Lesia Liss,

We are counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

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Sincerely,


Carole Slater

38643 Filly Drive
Sterling Heights, MI. 48310

DATE

Dear (local elected official) - *LESLIE LISS*

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Sincerely,

NAME

[Signature] (SCHOOL EMPLOYEE)

*PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT US!
WE HAVE FAITH IN YOU!
WHY CAN'T WE ALL GET ALONG?
WHO WILL SURVIVE? US? OR MR. SUTHER?*

4-1-11

Dear Lawmaker,

You must take action to avert the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut!!! That is crazy! This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil. That's a major disinvestment in education and it spells a massive disaster for our kids. My son hasn't even started kindergarten yet and already we're talking about these kinds of cuts!

If the governor's current budget plan is enacted, our schools have no choice left except to make large program cuts and increase class sizes. These will definitely impact the educational lives of our students. Forget good MEAP scores and making AYP!

We cannot bring Michigan's economy back by lowering our investment in an educated workforce. The Governor's plan to reduce business taxes and use K-12 School Aid funds to support community colleges and universities is definitely not "shared sacrifice." Schools have already sacrificed a lot. Any more will fall directly on the backs of our children – they are the future of our state. Please do not let this happen!

Sincerely,

Pam and Kevin Temerowski

Very Concerned Parents

Dear Lawmaker,

Here is a story of hope... Some 25 years ago, I was enrolled in a Masters Degree class at Wayne State University being taught by a very inspirational professor. He told us a story about his involvement with education. Early on in his career he received a request from the State Department of Education. He was asked to undertake a journey to a Third World country, (whose name I can no longer recall). His goal was to assist in establishing an educational system and the building of schools, which he accepted.

When he arrived he was met with indescribable and deplorable conditions. He was truly taken aback by what he encountered. One day, he was standing in a makeshift tent with a mother who was trying to comfort a seriously ill child. She was also holding an emaciated baby in her arms. She asked the professor if he would please hold her baby so that she could better attend to her sick child in bed. He accepted the baby from the mother and while standing there, the baby died in his arms. Needless to say, he was devastated.

Upon returning home to the United States, he immediately went to his State Department of Education and questioned the reasoning and/or logic behind sending him to such a god-forsaken place. These people are in desperate need of the most basic things necessary for survival. They had little food, no medicine, deplorable shelter and unsanitary water to drink. He asked, "Why in God's name would you send me, an educator, to place where not even their basic needs are being met? How could I possibly be of service to them? They have nothing!"

Their answer to him has resonated within me throughout my twenty some years as an educator. "Because education represents hope... and without hope you truly have nothing." These parents needed to believe that there was hope for a better future for their children.

This brings me to the reason for this correspondence. The impending bills in Congress taking devastating aim at the K-12 education budget, should they pass, will undoubtedly lead us onto the path of an unstable, unacceptable and ultimately unsuccessful educational system for our children.

Are you going to be the one to say to them: you're not worth educating?

Are you going to be the one who continues to widen the gap between the Haves and Have Nots?

Are you going to look them in the eyes and tell them there is no hope for them?

I certainly hope not. It is my hope that you will go to the place inside of you that called you to public service in the first place, the place where hope lives. Thank you for your time and consideration. While I understand the seriousness of our financial situation, let's not attempt to fix it by sacrificing our children's education and their hopes for the future.

Sincerely,

Hugs!

Mrs. Judy DuPont

2nd Grade Teacher

Green Acres Elementary

Warren, MI

4-2-11

Dear Ms Liss

We are counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

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Sincerely,

Rachel Feger

April 1, 2011

Dear Ms. Lesia Liss:

We are Michael and Stephanie Mahar, and are proud parents of three children, Keagan 8, Cade 2, and Bryce 1. We have dreamed of giving our children every opportunity in life they can have. As parents always say, "I want to give my children more than I had." Our children are being well educated. Our oldest is in Utica Community Schools, and has had outstanding educators that have opened his eyes to excitement in all subject areas. Our two youngest started in a structured daycare in Warren Woods Public Schools where they have been exposed to socialization and academics on their level. The oldest has played soccer, baseball and flag-football, and has the hopes of playing sports all the way through school. Our youngest have been involved in extra-curricular activities too, soccer, swimming, and tot/parent classes. We feel it is important to expose our children to many opportunities, so they can find their strengths in life.


We cannot imagine all of their hopes and dreams being taken away from them. We cannot believe our school districts will have to consider cutting sports programs; the idea of cutting sports programs is insane. It will only cause students to get into trouble after school, there will be no where for them to go, no school spirit to be proud of, and for parents who cannot afford to pay for sports, and we will increase lack of physical health and crime. Cutting out elective classes – gym, band, art, etc. would be devastating. For many children, the creative arts are their outlet or their only strengths, we have students who will be artists and musicians, but why would you be concerned about that? If you eliminate transportation, we wonder if it has been considered how children will get to school. Parents, including us, both work. Of course a before school program will be considered, but that is an additional cost. What will the state do when kids are kidnapped? Hit by cars? Skip school?

We are also educators. Michael has been teaching for eleven years, and I have been teaching for ten years, at Warren Woods Middle School in Warren Woods Public Schools. We are dedicated to our careers, yes, careers, not jobs. We made a choice to make a difference in the life of children every year. We have gone back to school-our own cost, obtained Master's Degrees, continued our education to renew our certificates to learn how to be better teachers, to make sure we understand the needs of the children in our classroom. We give these kid hope, dreams, and aspirations. We work with kids who are all different levels, and teach them, all of them.

It would be a devastating blow to the educational future of all children to take away from the kids. You are not taking away from the school or teachers or administrations – **YOU ARE TAKING AWAY FROM THE KIDS!** You are taking away from the future, you are taking away from learning opportunities, you are taking away from enjoying learning to read and write. You are taking away from schools moving forward with technology. **YOU** can make a choice...stop, think about the impact, think of your own kids, your nieces, nephews, neighbors kids. Come to our school, visit our classrooms, stay for the day, teach a lesson, meet the kids you are going to impact, please.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mahar


smahar@waw.misd.net

April 1, 2011

Ms. Lesia Liss
State Representative
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. Calvert", written in a cursive style.

Nancy A. Calvert
27528 Audrey Ave.
Warren, MI 48092

Dear Ms. Lesia Liss,

My letter today to you is about "Hope". The hardest thing about the teaching profession is to give hope and to inspire students. It is our job to give hope to students who didn't have it before. It is also our job to inspire these students to go out into society to be better citizens through our social studies classes. We give them hope to achieve any dreams they may have. We give them hope to reach for a college education even though it may not be in their family plan or budget. We inspire them to be better people in hallways by not bullying and teasing. We give them hope to be great athletes one day. We inspire them to be healthier through physical education classes. We give them hope to be a doctor in our science classes. We give them hope to be brilliant business men and women in our math classes.

We do all of this because we love our students that come through our classes. We love them like they were our own. I have been working in Warren Woods Public Schools for over 10 years now. I look at all of these students that I have taught like my own child. I love each and every one of them like they were my own blood. I have grown to know their families. I have been invited to their homes for graduation parties. I have had some past students to my house to babysit my children.

My question is how do I look my children and these children in their eyes and tell them I have to take away their hope? I have to inform them that I am sorry, but there will be no sports next year. I have to inform some of them who want to play sports in college; their chances have dwindled because of this. I have to inform that student that is getting bullied that he has to deal with it until the counselors get here on Friday because that is the day the company can send them out. How do I inform them that their exploratory classes like art, physical education, and band is being eliminated? How do I inspire a student to come to school anymore when, for some, school is all they have?

In the 1994 movie, "Shawshank Redemption", Andy Dufresne says to Red, "Remember, Red, **hope** is a good thing, maybe the best of things. And no good thing ever dies" Well, I want you to think about this when you pass your vote for this years budget and these bills. These bills and budget will kill the hope of many children, your children, my children, and the children at Warren Woods Middle School.

"Love comes to those who still hope even though they've been disappointed, to those who still believe even though they've been betrayed, to those who still love even though they've been hurt before."

(Unknown) I love our state, I love our country and I still have hope in you. I have "hope" ~~that you as~~ human beings and leaders of our state can inspire our state and our children. My biggest hope is that you don't take away that "hope" for our children.

Sincerely,



Michael S. Mahar

mmahar@waw.misd.net

Teacher

Warren Woods Middle School

April 1, 2011

Dear Ms. Lesia Liss

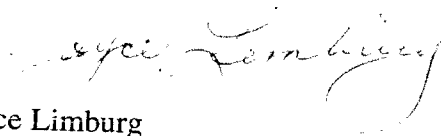
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We cannot bring Michigan's economy back by lowering our investment in an educated workforce. The Governor's plan to reduce business taxes and use K-12 School Aid funds to support community colleges and universities is definitely not "shared sacrifice." Since when do we take away from a required education and give to a college which is a choice and privilege? Schools have already sacrificed a lot. Any more will fall directly on the backs of our children – they are the future of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joyce Limburg".

Joyce Limburg

Warren Consolidated parent and taxpayer

April 8, 2011

Dear House of Representatives, Leisa Liss,

We are counting on you to avert the financial chaos that the Governor's proposed \$470 per-pupil cut will create for Warren Consolidated Schools and our children. This cut, together with other cuts and new state mandates, add up to a total loss of between \$800 and \$1,100 per-pupil or about \$17 million for Warren Consolidated Schools in just one year. That's a major DISINVESTMENT in education and it spells disaster for our kids.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen George". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, sweeping "H" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Helen George
28116 Besmore
Warren, MI 48093



ISAAC - Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy & Action in the Community

412 East Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3888
269-341-4213 ♦ Fax 269-341-4218

Affiliated with the Gamaliel Foundation
and MI*Voice (Michigan Interfaith Voice)

www.isaackalamazoo.org

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St. John's Social Justice Guild
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Church
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Wesley Foundation of Kalamazoo
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Westwood United Methodist Church

An Open Letter to Our Michigan State Legislators ~ April 27, 2011

We, people of faith in Kalamazoo County, wish to express our perspective on this budget, asking that you seriously consider the points we raise and the requests we make. Our examination of the budget has been guided by two principles. First, we believe Michigan must make strategic investments in areas that are proven to make a good return on investment. Second, we believe that it is our duty as good and moral people to make decisions that help alleviate poverty and not thrust more families into poverty.

Our analysis has led us to two positions. First, we believe that we should avoid any cuts to K-12 education, preschool, and 0-5 programs. Research shows the impact that high-quality early childhood programs have on the life outcomes of children. These programs not only allow children to earn more when they become adults; but also reduce costly social interventions and criminal justice expenses. When these children enter school ready to succeed, K-12 education must be strong and effective, with high-quality teachers preparing young people to be productive engines of innovation this state desperately needs.

Second, we applaud the Governor's efforts to create a fair and simple business tax. While his desires are well-intentioned, we believe the execution is poor. In replacing the Michigan Business Tax and the MBT Surcharge with a 6% across the board corporate tax, the Governor would exacerbate the state deficit. His proposed budget further asks the working poor and middle class to take the brunt of the cuts. There is, however, a middle road. We urge you to keep the business tax simple and easy, but to work with your colleagues to set it higher. An 8% business tax rate will allow us to compete with nearby states and still eliminate a huge portion of the deficit facing Michigan.

*Minnesota provides an instructive example. The business tax in Indiana is 8.5%; Illinois 9%; Minnesota 9.8%. Yet business conditions in Minnesota are strongest **because** they have the best educated work force! Education needs to be our state's #1 priority if we truly want to grow. Setting the simplified business tax rate at 8% will still create a favorable business climate, as well as the funding necessary for high-quality education.*

We know you will be presented with difficult choices in the coming days. The Governor has chosen his priorities in his budget. Now that it is your turn, we ask that you remember that we all do better when our children do better. Please make the right choices for Michigan's future.

*With our gratitude and our prayers,
Clergy and Leaders of ISAAC in Kalamazoo County*

3/18/2011

Dear Honorable

My heart breaks as I write this. When I think of repercussions of HB 4306, HB 4152 and BT on the children of Michigan, Gov. Snyder's plan will hurt our children for generations to come.

Our children truly are our future and the aforementioned bills will rip away that future.

Please support our children, our future, by voting no on these bills and coming up with some sane solutions for funding education.

Sincerely,

Durga Miranda

4/12/11

Dear Ms. Lesia Liss,

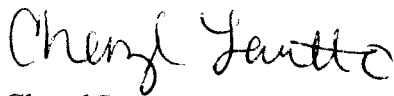
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If the governor's current budget plan is enacted, our schools have no choice left except to make large program cuts and increase class sizes. These will definitely impact the educational lives of our students. I as a parent will strongly consider the possibility of **MOVING OUT OF MICHIGAN** to give my children a better education! I **do not** want my children growing up without the benefits of music, art, and other allied arts.

We cannot bring Michigan's economy back by lowering our investment in an educated workforce. The Governor's plan to reduce business taxes and use K-12 School Aid funds to support community colleges and universities is definitely not "shared sacrifice." Schools have already sacrificed a lot. Any more will fall directly on the backs of our children – they are the future of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Lantto".

Cheryl Lantto

Marlene Azzo

Warren, MI 48092-5149

March 29, 2011

The Honorable Lesia Liss
Michigan House of Representatives
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Liss:

The foundation of any career relies deeply and heavily on adequate and equal education. We are cheating children, teenagers, and adults out of a bright and successful future by stripping them from opportunities in education. The irony of this is that Governor Snyder is also proposing to strip K-12 students from \$470 EACH in order to fund community colleges and universities. Now, how, in the world, does this add up? Well, it doesn't.

We are decreasing the value of education in Michigan because of this machine we call our governor.

Please fight with us and more importantly, fight for education all over Michigan. What happened to freedom and opportunity? What happened to equality? Prisoners over education is simply ludicrous!

Thank you for taking the time to view this message and more importantly, thank you for your voice.

Sincerely,

Marlene Azzo

PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Ms. Liss,

My children attend school at Wilkerson Elementary and Willow Woods Elementary in the Warren Consolidated School District. As my children's educational journey has just begun, I have found joy in the commitment of our nursery/preschool /kindergarten programs as they helped to create two creative, bright little boys who most importantly "love" to go to school. Additionally, I feel that my boys education academically has been solid embraced by a learning community that provides opportunities for friendships not only at school but in our neighborhoods.

I understand that you will be voting on proposed budget cuts that will:

- Create a deficit of up to \$37million for our district.
- Use K-12 funding to support community colleges and universities
- Force our district to increase class size and cut or reduce activities and programs that we need

This is not acceptable to me and should not be acceptable to you. I am asking you to follow options that protect the financial future of our schools and our students. It is simple. Leave the K-12 School Aid Fund alone. A quality education is the number one priority for the families that you serve in our community. If you choose to support these cuts to the K-12 funding, I will have no choice but to consider this when election time comes.

Sincerely,

Kim Viviano

Tomiko Gumbleton - School Aid Funding

From: [REDACTED]
To: <tgumbleton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/28/2011 12:57 AM
Subject: School Aid Funding

As a Michigan Tax Payer, I am **STRONGLY OPPOSED** to the Governor's budget proposal of shifting \$195.9M from K-12 funding for community colleges and \$699.7M for higher education for a total of \$895.6M. Furthermore, the additional \$200M cut due to proposed tax changes is also **UNACCEPTABLE**. The recommended Foundation Allowance roll back is also **UNACCEPTABLE**.

The K-12 education funds need to be preserved for K-12 operations. Community colleges & state universities are businesses and have multiple revenue producing opportunities limited only by their respective administrations. Popcorn, candy, magazine sales and bottle drives are about the extent of extra revenue sources K-12 have available. Higher education has tuition, research (private and governmental), endowments and other revenue streams available.

I elected to send my children to Catholic Schools (1-12). I would also like to know IF there has been any studies on what the impact would be if all private schools closed and their students were absorbed into the public school system? I want my tax dollars and cents to remain dedicated to K-12 public education.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTOPHER SCAGNETTI

[REDACTED]
Canton, MI 48187

Tomiko Gumbleton - written testimony

From: [REDACTED]
To: <tgumbleton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/27/2011 11:53 PM
Subject: written testimony

To whom it may concern,

If the current budget cuts are put into effect in education, it will devastate my career and family. I am a single father with shared custody of my two children. With one income, I am barely staying afloat. The district I work for has made an enormous amount of cuts over the last 5 -6 years. We are working more and getting less in return. The proposed cuts will make it next to impossible for me to continue to stay in this career that I love. Many teachers, including myself, will leave the occupation to find better paying jobs. Why would anyone want to teach and take on all the responsibility of being an educator, role model, parent, nurse, disciplinarian, and counselor, when they could make the same or more somewhere else with far less responsibility. With larger class sizes, the teachers that stay, will be far less effective. They won't be able to give the children the one on one time they deserve, and the quality of education will go down. Due to the drop in quality, people will leave the public sector and move their kids to private schools. In fact, I will move my own kids out of public schools because I want what's best for them. The current proposals are not in the best interests of the kids. I love this state, I love my job, and I love kids. If Governor Snyder thinks that these proposals will help education, he is way off base. If the quality of our educational system drops, no new business will come to our state. No business will move into a state where their employees' children are getting a poor education. In conclusion, If the proposed cuts are passed, the educational system will become devastated, and even more people will leave our great state.

Thank you,
Matthew Tepper

Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton (District 27) - Testimony to Fight School Cuts

From: "Megan O'Shea" <umgoblue96@aol.com>
To: <ellenlipton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/22/2011 12:30 AM
Subject: Testimony to Fight School Cuts
CC: <jimtownsend@house.mi.gov>

Representative Lipton –

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about how the cuts in school funding will affect my family. I'm sending this email to you in hopes that it will provide some insight on why I oppose the cuts in education to those supporting the governor's proposed budget which raids the School Aid Fund.

I have lived in Royal Oak primarily since 1996. I spent my 20s here and now, married with kids and in my 30s, am getting ready to send my oldest child to kindergarten. My husband and I have always wanted to send our children to public schools, and have been staying informed of the Royal Oak Schools' news for several years.

The School Board for the School District of the City of Royal Oak voted to increase the class size to 30 for all grade levels at their April 2011 board meeting. We know that they were not happy to make this decision, but because of the decrease in funding were forced to do so. This increase in class size is causing great angst in our household as we anticipate our daughter starting kindergarten in the fall. Even if our daughter were to excel in school, we have trepidation about her needs and the needs of others always being met in this oversized classroom. How can a teacher or even a teacher and a paraprofessional answer all the questions from 30 children? How can he or she give the extra attention to the students who need it, the ones who excel and the ones in between? These students are trying to learn new concepts that will give them the foundation for future success. By stuffing classrooms with too many students, we are not providing them with the opportunity that should be available for every child. And, these oversized classrooms would be taxing on even the best teachers. Neither teachers nor students would experience any benefit from increasing the classroom size.

I have a master's degree from the University of Michigan in Adult Instruction and Performance Technology. I have worked in the business of providing education and training programs for adults for 15 years. We would never recommend putting 30 adults in a classroom and I cannot imagine a successful classroom with 30 kindergartners or 30 children at any grade level, for that matter. Why? Thirty is simply too many people to manage in an educational setting. Skilled facilitators would not meet all the needs of the adults in a class this size; why would we expect teachers of children, who would most likely have more varying needs than adults, to be able to handle all their needs on a daily basis?

Along with this increase in class size, there are several other changes that the school district is making, such as laying off teachers and administrative positions, eliminating classes and increasing fees for sports. I'm sure some of these items seem minor to those reviewing a line-item budget, however, if you are the one sending your child to school where there are fewer resources, not enough teachers, or elimination of elective education courses, then it does become important. What do we need to do to get the legislators in Lansing to understand the ramifications of these cuts?

I am so disappointed that the public school system that I grew up with is no longer the same and that my daughter and son will not get the same opportunities that I had when I attended school. I am also disappointed that I now need to look at possibly sending my kids to a private school, which was so far off my radar until now. Unfortunately, I feel that I have no choice but to be a responsible parent and give them the best opportunities that I can provide. I know that many families are experiencing the same dilemma that we are and as these cuts unfold, we will be creating bigger barriers into those who can provide a private education and those who cannot. Public schools were originally intended to provide our citizens with the equal opportunity for a good education. If cuts like these pass, we are moving farther away from the intent of America's public school system.

We still hope to send our daughter and our son, in a few years, to Royal Oak Schools. However, if the governor's proposed budget and the school cuts are indeed passed, we feel like we will have no choice but to send our children to a different school where they can get the education we were expecting.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Megan O'Shea
 401 N. Wilson Ave.
 Royal Oak, MI 48067

From: Tessa Basirico <tbasirico@yahoo.com>
To: <ellenlipton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/20/2011 4:34 PM
Subject: re:school funding

Dear Representative Lipton

I would like to address the latest piece of legislation that attacks public education.

One of my biggest concerns at this time is the proposed raid on the State School Aid Fund. There is sufficient money in the fund to give K-12 education adequate funding, if not even an increase. To pull money from the K-12 fund to give it to community colleges and other schools of higher education is draconian.

First, colleges have the ability to raise revenue in other ways, while K-12 schools do not. Secondly, many schools in the K-12 arena are down to their last dollar - literally. One hundred and fifty school districts are facing bankruptcy. The cuts they will have to make will undo all of the fine programs in place at schools like mine (Bloomfield Hills); like interventions for students who need extra help, the exemplary curriculum work, the rich art and music programs, that makes our schools some of the best in the state. And this is just the beginning! Between proposed loss of revenues and increased costs, school districts are millions of dollars in debt. How can quality education hope to survive facing that insurmountable obstacle?

Most disgusting to me is the reason for making these cuts to education. Freeing up General Fund dollars so our state government can give a \$1.8 BILLION dollar tax break to businesses is unfathomable to me. How can a multi-billion dollar tax break for businesses be more important than a quality education for all children?

Most importantly, by making this cut in education by shifting funds out of the School Aid Fund, you are totally violating the wishes of those who voted for the initiation of Proposal A in the 1990's. It was a decision of the electorate and should be respected as such.

The most important function of a state government is to ensure that schools are funded to do the best job possible to create the best students and future citizens, business owners, lawyers, engineers, doctors, legislators, teachers, etc.

I implore you to NOT shift funds for K-12 Education to the General Fund. Use the money in that fund the way the electorate intended.....funding K-12 Education

Thank you for your time,
Tessa Basirico

Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton (District 27) - Public School Funding

From: TARA MENCHACA <taraho26@hotmail.com>
To: <ellenlipton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/26/2011 9:43 PM
Subject: Public School Funding

I am a very concerned parent of three children in the Garden City Michigan school district. My children are currently in grades Kindergarten, Second, and Third grades. Currently they are all flourishing and very smart children with a bright future ahead. Unfortunately, my district will be losing approximately \$600 per student from an already financially struggling budget. We truly are drowning in a deficit that seems to have no end. As far as cutbacks are concerned, my knowledge is only what the general public knows and it seems that we have gotten down to the bare bones of pure necessity. With all of the cutbacks that we have already sacrificed, it seems very daunting and devastating that we have to cut even more. Currently my children are receiving music, art, gym, and foreign language in their curriculum. These seem to me to be basic concepts that offer a well rounded education to children that will some day lead our world. Considering the position that you hold within our state, I wonder if you would be there today without these aspects of your education. Would you have been compelled to reach out of the box and become someone who makes your world a better place. These things separate high achievement from mediocrity.

Please consider for a moment if your school funding had been so that you received a below average education, if you would be where you are today. Maybe or maybe not, but shouldn't we make every attempt to nourish our children's educational needs? Shouldn't we put money into education before we spend one dollar on anything else? Aren't our children our biggest asset for our future? Don't we want to turn Michigan around? Please answer these questions for yourself and I'm sure that you and I can agree that all of the answers are yes.

I feel that there have been excesses in the school systems, but I believe that these things have been cut. They've been cut, cut again, and cut again. We now have no more to give and I fear for my children and their futures. Especially when each district receives budgets based on different criteria. Although I do not claim to fully understand how that is decided upon, I see no fairness in that system. It is basically a fact that my children would receive a better education in the Canton/Plymouth school district than in Garden City. Canton is a higher income city than Garden City, so those children should receive more money?!? Each student across the State of Michigan should have the same opportunity to learn. Unfortunately, it takes money to learn.

I am not in the dark about how hard hit Michigan is right now under our current economic conditions. I do understand that money is lacking everywhere and it's a hard time for all of us. I just feel so strongly that we should FUND SCHOOLS FIRST. Doing so will pay us all back in the end. Please take this letter to heart and share with as many people as you can. Our children need help.

Sincerely,

Tara Menchaca
Garden City Michigan School District Parent
734-788-3465

From: "Debbie Baker" <mdbaker@comcast.net>
To: <ellenlipton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/26/2011 9:35 AM
Subject: meeting in Berkley last night

Dear Ellen,

Thank you so much for coming over to Anderson Middle School last night. I know how busy you are and how tirelessly you are working against this and I just wanted you to know that your efforts are not going unnoticed. Ever since I met with you in Lansing last month, I have been trying to explain to everyone I talk to about this subject what a dynamic force you are. I am glad that they were now able to see it themselves.

Thanks again,
Debbie Baker

Tomiko Gumbleton - written testimony

From: Stephen Miller <svenmills@hotmail.com>
To: <tgumbleton@house.mi.gov>
Date: 4/22/2011 2:44 PM
Subject: written testimony

Dear Tomiko,

Currently, I teach Biology and Chemistry in a resource room for special education students. On average I have ten students in my classroom per class. Now this may sound like a very small number until you understand the needs of the students in my classroom. Each child needs individual attention to understand the information and then build confidence in their ability to accomplish the work on their own. With the current budget cut proposed I am concerned that I would not maintain such small numbers in the classroom. Too many students would be enrolled in each class and I would be unable to give this specialized attention. Adjustments to the curriculum would have to be made to a lower level or risk the chance of failure or defeat where the student does not feel they have a chance at success. This would lead to a population without diplomas because the dropout rate would soar and they would be without a job skill looking for handouts from a government agency. The students deserve a chance at the same education as regular education. The state standards are met within the small setting.

All students are able to understand science when they construct their own knowledge through labs. With the proposed budget cuts there first will be no funds for consumable supplies used in the labs and secondly the ability to run a lab with too many students at one time is impossible. I am sure that there are non-educators out there that would argue this point and say that there are virtual labs in the computer. I would argue the point that there is a difference in physically doing the lab versus watching a lab being done. There is no opportunity for the students to see that mistakes can lead to greater understanding or new concepts. Knowledge that is self created is life-long whereas regurgitation of material is short-lived.

The education of the students demands that money be spent on them. I am concerned that the future classrooms will look more like a lecture hall with the proposed budget cuts and all students, not just the special education students need to have an opportunity for one on one with the teacher for clarification of information. This will not be possible with overcrowded classrooms.

Thank you for your concern. Sincerely,

Evelyn Miller